

Integrated Workplace

Where Is GSA's Latest "Office of the Future"?

by Rob Obenreder, Office of Real Property

Welcome to the General Services Administration's (GSA) Office of the Future in Auburn, Washington. The Office of the Future breaks from traditional office layouts and takes an integrated approach towards planning the work environment. The exciting setting exemplifies for customers our commitment to lead Federal workplaces, within our region and across the Nation, into the new century.

*- L. Jay Pearson, GSA Regional Administrator
The Northwest/Arctic Region*

What is GSA's Office of the Future?

The Office of the Future incorporates into the workplace the latest innovations in interior design, furniture, and communications technology. It adapts the workplace to take advantage of new alternative ways of working, such as increasing emphasis on executive communication, teamwork, telecommuting, and other non-traditional ways of getting things done. The environment de-emphasizes the hierarchy, and capitalizes on self-initiation, communication, and collaboration.

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Why an Office of the Future?

The work environment facing GSA is changing. With technology revolutionizing the way people work, work process becoming more team based, real estate costs rising, and regional infrastructures stretched to the breaking point by population increases, offices must be designed to support change. In order to explore how GSA can better design and build work environments, the Northwest/Arctic Region developed and constructed GSA's Office of the Future. The scope of the pilot includes 30 selected leaders and their direct support staff from GSA's Public Buildings Service, Federal Supply Service, Federal Technology

Service, and the Office of the Regional Administrator. The close proximity of the leaders and staffs displays there is no distinction between the Services when it comes to fulfilling customer needs or requirements. (GSA's Northwest/Arctic Region is located at 400 15th Street SW, Auburn, WA 98001-6599)

Why now for an Office of the Future?

The Federal Government is undergoing massive change. Some of the effects of this change are increased workload and decreased staffs and budget. To assist GSA's customers with these changes, the agency's objective is to provide cost effective, easy access to goods and services, as well as consulting on space and technology alternatives.

Why GSA?

GSA's mandate is to provide expertly managed space, supplies, services, and solutions at the best value, so Federal employees can better accomplish their missions. With its governmentwide scope, GSA is in an ideal position to identify and share best business practices with its clients. The Office of the Future enables customers to see people at work in a more efficient and economical work environment.

What are the goals of the Office of the Future?

- Improve the organization's strategic leadership decision making and work processes at the executive level



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- Facilitate cross service collaboration and teamwork – “One GSA” concept
- Create a more centralized and open executive environment (“People need to become comfortable with openness.”)
- Make more efficient and effective use of space
- Design space to support work processes and work styles
- Explore and document new approaches to work and create a showcase for other agencies to learn from
- Develop market strategies for GSA customers
- Leverage the use of space and technology



As the planning process began, what were the goals for the design?

- To provide easy access to privacy when required

- To promote social interaction among the pilot group
- To provide a diversity of flexible settings to support a variety of interactions
- To effectively support virtual group collaboration

The firms used for the Office of the Future are:

- Consultant: Robert Hunt, The Hunt Group
- Contractor: MS General, Inc.
- Furniture from: Steelcase, Knoll, Herman Miller and SMED
- Carpeting: Interface
- Wiring for Technology: US West Deane Communications

For more information:

Contact Dan Brown, Director of Project Services, Public Buildings Service, on (253) 931-7321, for questions about Auburn's Office of the future, Kathy Reddick, Public Buildings Service, on (253) 931-7255 about having an Office of the Future built in that region, and the concierge on (253) 931-7144 for a tour. ■

